

if it were adopted and eventually went into the bill and the bill survived the conference.

The point I wish to make is, you are directing the President. For example, it says: The President shall redeploy, commencing in 2006, this year, United States forces from Iraq by July 1, 2007. So this is law. As we used to say in the old days, we are shooting real bullets with this one, not just a sense of the Congress.

Throughout the debate, not only this one in the past day or two on this bill, but we have always, certainly, on this side, resisted timetables. You talk about putting together a summit. That is on page 2, section (b), Iraq Summit: The President should work with the leaders of the Government of Iraq to convene a summit as soon as possible that includes those leaders, leaders of the governments of each of the countries bordering Iraq, representatives of the Arab League, the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization—I think that is important to have NATO in there—representatives of the European Union, and leaders of the governments of each permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, for the purpose of reaching a comprehensive political agreement for Iraq that engenders the support of the Sunnis, the Shias, and the Kurds by ensuring the equitable distribution of oil revenues—that is a very important point you make, disbanding the militias—another very important point, strengthening internal security, reviving reconstruction efforts and fulfilling related international economic aid commitments, securing Iraq's borders, and providing for a sustainable federalist structure in Iraq.

Those are all important subjects, commendable goals. But first let's go back. It has taken the Iraqis 18 months since the first election in early 2005, through three elections, through the formation of the first permanent government. And the first permanent government is just, as you and I as old sailors would say, getting its sea legs. You start a conference like this—and I think it is a good idea—but the first question that is going to be asked is, can we proceed to achieve any of these goals if we have overhanging this the redeployment of our forces by July 1, 2007?

Senator, that is a timetable. That is a concept which I and I think the majority in this Chamber have continuously rejected. How could you ask the other nations of the world to come in and begin to put their credit on the line, their dollars on the line, if you have this timetable to pull out the very foundation that is supporting such progress as has been achieved in the 18 months of getting the first government up and testing their sea legs?

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, that is a wonderful question and a very appropriate one. I really appreciate it. It gives me a chance to talk about the viability of this. First of all, may I re-

mind the distinguished chairman what I just said a moment ago. We are at 264,000. We have 144,000 more. That is 400,000 people prepared to go. They are in the streets now. We have 1 year to continue to work with them. Prime Minister Maliki has said himself that by the end of this year, in 16 out of 18 provinces they will be able to take over security. This is contemplated within the framework that the Prime Minister himself has adopted. This respects their sovereignty. It respects their capacity.

Secondly, in my conversations with leaders in the region, as recently as this year, ranging from the President of Egypt to the King of Jordan and others, what I gleaned from those conversations is, they are waiting for a series of kind of diplomatic and business conference efforts that do get them invested and invest the whole region in an understanding that the United States is going to be leaving, and they need to begin to accept that reality.

The longer we stay, the longer we delay their readiness and their need—let alone willingness—to come to the table. I respectfully suggest that it is within the framework of a year.

We did the Dayton Accords in less time. Milosevic did not want to come to the table. President Clinton persuaded Yeltsin to create a pressure point that brought people there. In effect, we made things happen against people's will by creating the pressure. This is the same kind of situation.

I say respectfully to the Senator, we have a far better chance of spending less money, losing less lives and being more effective in the war on terror if we pursue this than if we simply do what we are doing today.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, it might be the case, but I would be willing to make a modest wager with you that if you got this conference under way, the first thing that they would ask would be to suspend this timetable of July 1, 2007.

Mr. KERRY. And if that were the case, and they were prepared to come to the table to resolve these issues and be part of this process, then the President could come back to us and we would respond accordingly. We are not stupid. We want to act in the best interest of our country. The question is, how do you begin to push people to a place where they realize they have to confront these realities?

Secondly, the Senator's question makes a presumption that I just fundamentally disagree with and don't see in this amendment. That is if we pull out the foundation, I think the Senator said, we specifically say we arrive at a schedule coordinated with the Government of Iraq, leaving only the minimal number of forces that are critical to completing the mission of standing up Iraqi forces.

I have asked the Senator from Virginia, what are we there for? What are we there to do? We are there to fight al-Qaida. We allow for that. We are

there to stand up Iraqis for themselves. We allow that. And we are certainly there to protect American facilities. So what is it that is absent from here that would somehow pull out the foundation from anything?

Mr. WARNER. I say to the Senator, I cannot see, for example, the governments of each country bordering Iraq suddenly beginning to rush in if they feel that a civil war could start. The pulling out of the troops, the setting of a timetable will be a signal to all of the various factions. I will concede it is the Shia against the Sunnis that is the major faction. Wait them out. Let's let the troops flow out and then we will topple this government with a civil war.

It seems to me, I say to my colleague, you cannot expect these nations that border Iraq, the Arab League, I can't see that they would step up and say, we are willing to do everything. But wait a minute, coalition forces—

Mr. KERRY. Let me say to the Senator, I know he doesn't want American troops in the middle of a civil war. I know he doesn't think that that is why we sent our troops there.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I share that concern, but—

Mr. KERRY. That is where they are.

Mr. WARNER. It is the presence of our troops today that is probably holding it back from becoming a civil war.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, may I say respectfully, we will continue to be able to do that. Over the course of the next year, with over-the-horizon capacity and with our ability to move in an emergency, we are not going away. We have plenty of troops in Kuwait. We could have plenty of troops over the horizon. That is not going to fall apart. The problem is that the tasks that the Senator is referring to, each of them are civilian tasks. They are political tasks. You don't need 138,000 American troops as targets to complete those tasks when you have 400,000 Iraqis allegedly trained and equipped and prepared to defend their country.

Let me ask the Senator: Did Iraq or did it not fight Iran for 10 years within the last 25 years?

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I remember well that conflict because I was then on the Intelligence Committee.

Mr. KERRY. And they lost a million people fighting for almost 10 years for their country. These are the same people. Four years later we are still driving trucks down the street and our guys are taking IEDs. Are you telling me that they don't have people who can drive a truck? They don't have people to go out on patrol? Why aren't our people garrisoned and being held in reserve in case there is an implosion? What are we doing with our troops being the ones that have to go out? I don't get it. I believe there is a better way to wage this effort. That is what this amendment contemplates.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, we just disagree. I feel this government hasn't